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Love Triumphant.

Fred Henderson.

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LOVE TRIUMPHANT:

A Series of Sonnets.

BY

FRED HENDERSON.

LONDON:
JARROLD AND SONS, 3, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS.
1888.

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TO LUCY.

Give me thy love, and I will ask
No other meed of fame;
To praise thee, dearest, is my task,
To win thine heart, my aim.

Though many listen to the tone
The nightingale doth raise,
He sings to please his love alone,
Nor cares for others' praise.

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One or two of these pieces are reprinted from "Our Corner."

LOVE TRIUMPHANT.

I.

LOVE'S DAWN.

One whom I knew for Love came to my sleep,
And softly gazed with dreamy eyes on me
The while he whispered, "Wilt thou be set free,
Or shall yon grave for ever hear thee weep?"
Then answered I, "O Love, I fain would reap
The fair young flowers of thy harvestry,
But well thou knowest how my life will be
In yonder grave with her and buried deep."
Then answered he, "Look up! Thou'rt mine again,
Not Sorrow's." Lo, a vision wondrous fair
Stood by his side, such as the hearts of men
Oft dream of, seeing never; and I bear
The deep red rose of Love upon my breast,
Where erst Death's pallid lilies found sad rest.

II.

HOPELESS.

I do not blame thee, Love, that thou hast set
  My heart upon a goal I ne'er can reach,
  Nor would I ask Oblivion to teach
The placid peace that comes when we forget;
Nay, though my cheeks with tearful dew are wet,
  And broken as a March day is my speech,
  I will not e'en in dreams thine art impeach,
But rather joy that thou and I have met.
Leave me not, Love! She whom I love is fair;
  And I am but a leaf upon the tree
Nigh to her nest and see her mated there;
  And yet, O Love, it is deep joy to me
That thou hast filled her life with thy sweet care,
  Nor would I cease to love, though hopelessly.

III.

FAILURE OR GAIN?

A WAVE that feels the white moon's lifting power;
The star of dawn that vainly loves the day
But ere it finds it, fades in death away;
A soaring eagle at the noontide hour
Striving towards the sun; the summer flower
That loves the nightingale; with Love's new wine
A poet filled who feels some thought divine
And strives to grasp it for his fame's great dower;
These never can attain to their desire
Nor be with perfect fulness satisfied,
And may not I, who goddesswards aspire,
Strive vain as they to soar so far above?
Failure or gain, come, help me, mighty Love,
I will not doubt my wings till I have tried.

IV.

MUSIC.

My soul is tossed with vague unrestfulness,
My life is weary as a drooping flower,
The weirdness of some mystic spirit power
Doth on my being its strange influence press;
Soothe me with music, let its sweet caress
Fall on me as a May-refreshing shower
Twinkles among the buds, and leaves a dower
Of odorous wealth renewed and loveliness.
Play some wild melody whose notes o'erflow
With longings from the soul of saddest thought,
Whose strains beneath some sorrow seem to grow,
Whose spirit shall the same weird heart have caught
As that which swells within me. Oh! how dear
Music's sweet sadness is in wild Love's ear!

V.

BORROWED LIGHT.

As earth and moon pursue their circling way
  Each to the other seemeth fair and bright,
  Clothed in the reflex of the sun's great light;
Yet each knows well that darkness is its trait:
Even so, perchance, although in me there may
  Be nothing that is worthy of her sight,
  Yet by the glow of Love, my sun, bedight,
She may see beauty in the borrowed ray.
Oh, that we twain for ever might pursue
  Our course together like a double sphere,
  And passing Time, in that glad golden year,
Such glory of great happiness should view,
That he would leave us to our bliss, and rue
  With his keen sickle our twinned joy to shear.

VI.

HOPE.

When my life's night was very sad and lone
  Thou, my fair dawn, hast brought the light to me,
  And shown me Hope, for since the world holds thee
Good things and lovely are not wholly flown:
Nor is there need for evermore to moan
  Though some fair dreams in sorrow buried be,
  What need of weeping for the stars' dead glee?
The sun for them doth millionfold atone.
Thy looks have made a new life stir in me;
  I hold Love's sea-shell promises to hear
  The murmur of their music in mine ear,
And lo, they tell me secrets; ah, shall he
  Who hears such whispers speak them? Nay, I fear
That thou canst read my secret mystery.

VII.

A DAY TOGETHER.

We had not spoken of our love at all,
  Only with joy of mutual company
  What time we roamed beside the sunlit sea,
We felt that passion had made each his thrall;
We knew, but spoke it not, that our deep bliss
  Was not alone the glory of the day,
  We knew that had the other been away
Neither alone had felt such happiness:
But when we sat at quiet evening's hour,
  Hearing the song of that day's great delight
Made loud by memory's past-recalling power,
  Love, like an undertone that swells in might,
Took up the strain and spoke, and then we knew
What was our source of joy the whole day through.

VIII.

LOVE'S APPEAL.

If Love be rash and foolish, do not chide him
That thy dear eyes have gazed his wit away;
If he be hasty, do not thou deride him
That he can bear suspense not nor delay;
If he be mad, it was thyself supplied him
With that which snatched his wisdom quite away.
I must break silence: when wild winds do blow
Upon the forest it doth loudly sigh,
So, when Love breathes on me, my words must flow
In a loud cry of longing, nor can I
Stop the wild burning agony of speech
That would for Love a light of hope beseech;
I ask but leave to utter this, my cry,
And if thine heart responds not, let me die.

IX.

HOPE AND FEAR.

'Twixt hope and fear alternate swayed am I,
  Waiting her answer to my love's appeal;
  Hope whispers softly of the coming weal,
And makes my pulsing heart beat doubly high;
Fear cometh then, a hound that tightly clings
  Upon the deer, and makes it grovel low
  From freely bounding o'er its native snow;
And thus the long-drawn day between them swings.
Be at her heart, O Love, and in her eyes,
  That as she reads thou may'st interpret it;
Teach her that mortals to be truly wise
Must learn of thee; that who thy voice despise,
  Though they possess all else, yet lack the wit
To know the best, and hold life's worthiest prize.

X.

LOVE'S RAPTURE.

As when upon the weary waiting earth
  Spring, long-expected, rests her heavenly wings,
  One long delightful song of rapture rings
From all the world at Beauty's bright new birth;
So would I sing aloud my triumph lay,
  And make high heaven listen to my joy,
  The clouds of night the dawning doth destroy,
And Love fulfilled doth rule the happy day.
Oh hide you, storied lovers of the past,
  Get you to cold Oblivion and sleep,
Your highest joy have I o'ertopped at last,
  And you your well-earned restfulness may reap;
For no man e'er as I held love so vast,
  Nor drew the breath of happiness so deep.

XI.

FREE LOVE.

Some choose them lovers for a title's sake,
And many are there who do wed for gold,
And mostly they who fall in this mistake
Weep bitterly before their days are old;
I'd buy thee not with lordly name, I ween,
Nor offer wealth my passion's depth to prove,
If thou dost yearn for title, be my queen,
And if for wealth, take all I have, my love.
Love that is bought is lust, and I would know
The love that springeth freely from true hearts,
Whose trust is perfect, and, as time doth grow,
Whose joy ne'er palls, nor beauty e'er departs;
Free Love, which after many years will hold
Its first delight, nor ever can grow cold.

XII.

A SPRING DAY.—1.

HERE could I pass the hours, nor wish to move
Till east-thrown shadows bring the closing day,
And let my thoughts with Nature fly away,
As restless as the light and shade that rove
Across me here, as in this lovely grove
I lie reclined. A fairy-scented spray
Of rosed sweet-briar trails athwart the May,
That opes its blossomed breast to feed with love
The air, all odorous with musk, and filled
With music sweet as yonder thrush can sing.
The spirit of these violets is instilled
Into the breezes that around them wing,
And hyacinth and lilac here have wed,
And mixed their souls on this sweet daisied bed.

XIII.

A SPRING DAY.—2.

My Love must sure have wandered through these woods,
The tender wild rose holds so fair a blush
It must have looked on her; so deep a hush
Pervades the dreamy noontide, 'midst the buds,
Her voice must have charmed all as still as death
To quietness of listening; such a wealth
Of scent comes from this hawthorn that by stealth
It must have stolen it from her sweet breath;
The sun is here so golden and so bright
She must have looked upon it, and its soul
Kindled with deeper glory at the sight;
Through the melodious air such splendours roll
As naught but her fair presence could inspire,
My love, my soul, my spirit's one desire.

XIV.

MY SUN.

I saw the sky at night all sprinkled o'er
With twinkling of clear stars, a multitude
Thronged as on Goshen's plain were Israel's brood,
Or Pharaoh's fragments on the Red Sea shore;
At dawn the sun the ruddy day upbore,
Eclipsing all the myriad lights that strewed
As gems Night's cloak of black, and brightly hued
In rosy gold, the starry web he tore.
Full many a noble nature have I known
Clear-shining as a star, thou art the sun,
My darling, and in thee my life hath grown;
Thou art my day's clear orb, its only one:
Night hath her myriad stars, yet is not bright,
Day hath a single sun and all is light.

XV.

HER KISS.

As some carved god sits brooding on one thought,
With one fixed smile, defying wasteful Time,
Lost in a marble dream of some sublime
Great hopeful deed his hands have nobly wrought,
The years around his moveless feet have brought
The fleeting tides of men that ever climb
In lapsed succession round his godhead's prime,
Whose eyes with one deep changeless fate are fraught:
So would I take the touching of thy lips,
And ere the glory faded from my face
Fix it that never sorrow might eclipse,
But take the sudden stamp of marbled grace;
So might I brood for ever, changeless stone,
On the great glory that my lips had known:

XVI.

EXPECTED PARTING.

When I am gone and busy tongues of spite
Beset thine ear to steal thine heart from me,
Love, heed them not, whate'er their tale may be,
But when thou hear'st them, think of Love's great might.
Yea, as a flower when clouds close out the light,
That shuts itself against the day's rough mood,
And on its own heart's sweetest self doth brood,
Despising thus the winds that would affright;
So do thou turn thine hearing from their lies,
And to thine own heart listen, as it tells
Of all the love that in our being swells,
And Hope shall lead thy feet o'er flower-strewn ways,
Until we twain shall reach the sweet surprise
Of joy for us within the coming days.

XVII.

IN TIME OF ABSENCE.

Now do I know what loneliness is like ;
Through all the sleepless night to lie and see
Thy face for ever pictured on the dark,
To wish for morn, and when the daybreak comes
To wish again for night through aimless days :
Oh Love—but I am weary of this strain,
This waiting while the long days slowly go ;—
Why should we, who together could rejoice
And make the whole earth envy our delight,
Why should we thus asunder pine and weep
Till life seems nothing but dull weariness?
Come back, oh Love ; bethink thee now how Time
Will steal our days, and make us oft regret
The foolishness of parted days of youth.

XVIII.

EVIL TONGUES.

We two have given all our hearts of flame
Each to the other in Love's great delight,
And cast the bonds of custom out of sight,
Impulsed alone by passion's burning aim :
What though the world around us cry out, "Shame,"
And seek from out its impure heart of night
To bring forth blackness in our love's despite,
What care we for the loveless world's good name?
True hearts are few, and in the wintry air
They fade and sicken like November's flower,
And this our purest love must strive to bear
The killing force of slander's freezing hour ;
Since our own love is world enough for us,
By that we joy, nor heed men raving thus.

XIX.

A BALANCE.

HERE will I balance up my joy and woe,
The sweet and bitter mingled in my life;
Into one scale my every grief I'll throw,
The envy of small souls with slander rife,
The weariness of Hope unsatisfied,
The tears that I have shed for dear friends dead,
The undeservèd scorn, my worth denied,
The anguish of injustice round me shed,
The wrongs of earth that make Hell's fiends elate,
Right dowered with woe, evil with blessings fraught;
But when 'gainst these I put thy love's great weight
Then do I deem my sorrows all but naught;
While thou dost love, my griefs will seem to me
A raindrop weighed against the boundless sea.

XX.

LOVE AND FATE.

As when the moon behind thick clouds doth fall,
And to the roar of storms the sea replies,
When shuddering stars in terror veil their eyes,
And raven-wingèd blackness covers all,
Thunder to thunder 'midst the hills doth call,
And lightning with the deep-toned message flies,
While 'mid the tumult's glorious fury rise
Loud roaring winds and sounds majestical:
So great a power thy love would give to me
Were fate to strive to set our lives atwain,
That though his rage like this wild storm should be,
We two like stars above the clouds would reign,
And let the world so strong a love-bond see
That even Fate would prove his power in vain.

XXI.

PASSION'S FULNESS.

Oh Love, my Love, when o'er our love at last
  Death draws the veil of consciousless repose,
  And hearts shall rest in quiet that, God knows,
Have been tired out before their time was past,
Passion shall tempt not, nor shall Love beseech
  Our souls to taste the joy of his delight,
  Nor evermore shall clinging lips unite,
Nor Youth towards Love's perfect fulness reach.
Kiss me, O Love; the years bring nigh the close,
  Fill up the brimming juice of life and drink,
The summer passes, and the proudest rose
  Scarce sees its fulness ere its petals sink;
Let not the end bring visions of dead hours
Whose joys unplucked might surely have been ours.

XXII.

A LIFE PROSPECT.

Now with our love fulfilled and joy supreme
We two can look on life before us spread,
As some young streamlet from its fountain-head
Sees the wide plain below with beauty teem,
And while the days flow by us like a dream,
And through sweet hours our happy course is led,
Together o'er Love's fairy fields we'll tread,
Beyond the reach of aught that fear can deem;
And at the end when to death's tideless sea
The current of our lives shall flow at last,
No fond regret within our hearts shall be
For wasted days from us for ever past;
Come, O my Love, life offers joy to-day,
Together let us taste it while we may.

OTHER POEMS.

SAPPHO.

The waves on the rocks are moaning,
And the sky is golden above,
And the wild sad winds intoning
The melodies of love.

And high on the rocks there standeth
A maiden above the seas,
And her hair the wind unbandeth,
And round her flows the breeze.

She hears not the voice of the ocean,
  She feels not the wind's wild kiss,
For her heart is in sad commotion,
  And below her the abyss.

* * * * * *

The waves on the rocks are moaning,
  And flowing her form above,
And the wild sad winds intoning
  The death of a hopeless love.

AT HER WINDOW.

The summer night is waning fast,
The cool breeze round thy window clings;
The beauty of the dark is past,
And dawn another beauty brings;
Sleep yet a little, love, and see
In dreams that I am near to thee.

The jasmine's starry eyes can peep
Within thy room and see thee there,
Oh happy flowers to see the sleep
Of one so far surpassing fair;
Oh sleep, send sweetest dreams to be
The bearers of this kiss from me.

The mated birds begin to wake,
The daisy to unclose her cup,
And from the dewy hawthorn brake
Faint chirpings to the skies go up;
Oh Love, must I contented be
If but in dreams thou lovest me?

The golden light has grown more clear
And glows upon thy window now,
Would I were but the sunbeam, dear,
To enter thus and kiss thy brow:
Yet soon thou wilt awake, and see
Thy dreams become reality.

Lo, from the sun a level ray
Shoots brightly, and the glad earth sings,
To her has come another day
Borne on her sun-love's golden wings;
Awake, awake, my love, and be
Sunrise and happiness to me.

BRIDAL NIGHT.

FAR-spreading branches hung with fruited stars
Are canopy for us to-night,
And dead is every cursèd straint that bars
Our love from its delight.

Now let us love as if death came with morn,
And life had no more space to go,
Let us forget all past, and hold in scorn
The memory of woe.

Heed not the dew that gathers in thine hair;
Life hath a million tears in store,
And every day that passeth us will bear
To us one sorrow more.

Lo, how thine heart leaps underneath my touch,
Thy full-orbed bosom swells and falls;
We were not born with madness overmuch
To stay when pleasure calls.

We two within the circle of this night
Are shut from all the world beside,
And life's regretful sadness turns to light,
Clasped in thine arms, my bride.

Jarrold and Sons, Printers, Norwich.

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